The Prophecies of Man

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The Prophecies of Man

by Xoxo_27

Summary

"They say that destiny cannot come undone. Once she sinks her claws under your skin, she never let's go. You cannot defy destiny Young man. Oceans rise and Empires fall by its will . It cannot be subdued"

The witch looks upon Will with veiled scorn.

"I'm not afraid of Destiny, witch."

He utters with contempt.

" Destiny is nothing but a belief made by those hard headed fools, trying to convince themselves that there is order to this horse shit."

He stands, the blanket falls revealing his scarred body, chains around his wrists pull on his skin, irate with the perpetual conversation that he never fails to have with these mages.

"I will not be made a fool to the prophecies of man"

And with that, he makes a move to follow his warden out of the healer hut.

"Heed the warning ,Nymph."

Bedelia calls after him.

"You cannot outrun destiny. One day it will come and you'll be agape, because she would have already sunk her claws so deep that your soul will be bound."

Will does not stop to entertain her. As he stands by the entrance, he pauses his steps.

"I'll take my chances."

Notes

Pls dont come after me. English is not my first language so please be nice to me.

Before 'us'

Chapter Summary

A peek in Hannibal and Will's life before they meet.

Chapter Notes

There is a map i made for the world in this. It's not detailed but you get the idea.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

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Gladiator Rings
Fae Settlements
Capital City
Villages
Lugresh
Crou Strax
Skal Mountains
Acryae
Cannibal's Fiorde
Uthana
Dwarven Mines
Blug Arena
Volcanic Island

Chapter 1

The gladiator rings around the continent have always been a cesspool of filth and carnal destruction. It has been a tradition for nobles and peasants alike to watch as these *warriors,* slaves, fight for their right to live another day. Entertainment for the lofty and a warning to those that disobey their masters. Will has never known freedom. He was born in the rings, fights in the rings and eventually he will die there. For all his life, the only thing he had known of his predecessors was that they were from some backwater colony that was razed to the ground when the *masters* were in their era of pillaging. His mother, a water nymph, was delegated to breeding once she was flagged as unfit to fight. His father? Probably six feet under.

The days were mundane to say the least. Gladiators whether born or *taken in* all went through the same process. Brought into the *farm*, they go through rigorous *tests* that will delegate them to a breeding pen or be forced to fight. Will doesn't know which one is worse.

After a particularly daunting dragon borne opponent had left him indisposed, Will was fiddling with a small flower by the healers windows. The flower, as if sentient, dances with his fingers, growing, swaying with the aura of a nymph. Will's hair was the color of wood with dark green tips, his eyes crystal blue, like the sea in the calm before the storm. The top of his head adorns branch like horns that are stained with red from his opponents. He looks up when he sees movement in the corner of his eyes. The woman, Bedelia, was a witch that has been in charge of the health of the fae fighters for decades.

"Quite a fight that was, dear will." She comes closer with a needle and thine. Will doesn't answer, nor does he flinch when Bedelia starts stitching his torso, the only thing protecting his dignity is a blanket, draped across in lap.

"They say the dragon borne will not survive the night. What say you?" She looks everywhere other than his eyes. No one looks in his eyes

"What is there to say? Their Kind have always been prone to anger. What they have in physical prowess, I would say they lack in… well everything else." He snickers.

"I hear Master Mason's resident oracle had interesting visions as of late."

"Pertaining to what?" Will scrunches his forehead. He hasn't heard about Alana Bloom in a while.

“The prophecy of ruination. The nobles are all skeptical, as expected. Oracles have been preaching of the fall for generations.”

“Ha! Oh Gods Bedelia, when have you ever been a believer of those? Those crooks have spouted nonsensical flowery words for as long as anyone can remember.” When she raises her head, Will catches her eyes for a brief moment.

“ You are afraid, aren’t you? Your soul sings of uncertainty and something has ignited your dread of the future. Something has happened, a man? A monster, a stag razes through the forest and death, destruction, desolation, blithe—”

“Hey!” The warden covers his hand on Will’s eyes, pushing him on his back on the bed as. He is shaking, his chains taut and the plants are mirroring his psyche, thrashing like the wind is slamming them on the glass. The abrupt force made the stiches, still connected to the thine on Bedelia’s needle, tear.

“I deplore your carelessness witch. You know better than to let him get in your head. Get the collar.” The man sneers. Bedelia stands fast, handing the warden a collar with intricate runes marring the leather. He closes it along Will’s neck, so tight that it constricts his airways a little. Once the collar is on, Will stops seizing. His eyes are bleary and it takes him a while to get out of the trance. These spells are cruel. It’s akin to the feeling of being blind to someone like Will. Nymphs are known for their ability to feel, it’s debilitating.

“Finish faster. He needs to get back to his cell.” She finishes hastily after that, Will is silent throughout the process, he looks like he’s retreated to somewhere else entirely.

“You’re done Will. Move your arms, see if it feels tight anywhere.” Will stands and moves his arms in circular motions. Bedelia runs the routine checks and finally starts packing.

“Your star readings are done, yes?” She asks will. Master Mason gets all his slaves to get routine readings every month. He is a very superstitious man after all.

“Yes.”

“And the result?”

“Nothing more than what they always say. Same shit, different words.”

“You should be more careful, your readings have never bore anything pleasant.”

“Fuck off Bedelia.” She purses her lips. Not happy with his choice of vocabulary.

"They say that destiny cannot come undone. Once she sinks her claws under your skin, she never let's go. You cannot defy destiny Young man. Oceans rise and Empires fall by its will . It cannot be subdued"

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"I'll take my chances."

There are perpetual screams that echo throughout the cells. Will has learned to tune them out for the sake of his sanity. The other cages are filled with a plethora of different species, all collared, chained and scarred to an inch of their skin. This level of the arena are for the named gladiators. After a certain number of fights, they get “sponsors” that give them benefits the longer they stay winning. The sponsorships are not for free, these spenders get benefits not open to the general public, usually in the form of… private activities.

Will has been titled “Mimic”. He had a small number of supporters, he was usually not as liked because of his crass temperament. The cheers can be heard from above. Stomping of feet and a roar of victory. Another death. Will wonders who it was this time.

The demonian in the cell over leers at him. Miggs was an entity possessed by two souls. One a lecherous fiend and the other blood hungry.

“What?” Will lays on his cot, staring at the ceiling. The demonian hums.

“You’ve been different Will.” He grasps the bars, his smile wide, this dark red skin lit up by the lanterns.

“After your visit from that oracle, you’ve been skittish. What were you told? Someone as pretty as you shouldn’t be scowling, I’d hate to have to fuck you while you’re so sodden.” He laughs loudly. It rings in Will’s ear, making him want so desperately to *cut his tongue and shove it down his throat so he chokes on his words and drowns in his blood, reach down his gullet, grab at whatever he can reach and pull hard until his insides are beholden to the stale air. Will visualizes how his black blood would seep and stain his skin, filling the ground with the color of midnight, his breathes fast and eyes bulgi—*

“Mimic!” Someone bangs loudly at the metal bars, making Will open his eyes to look over at the dark elf in a guard uniform.

“The master has ordered for you to entertain some sponsors that are coming in a few days.”

“Tsk. How many? Who are the guests?”

“Just one, some noble from the Lugresh Kingdom. Ever heard of the Count Lecter?”

“No. Did the master mention why he requires me specifically?”

The man clenches his jaw. “Why all the questions hex blood? Just do as your told you *pix*.” Will’s eyes darken with the slur. He stands up and walks towards the guard.

“It’s not very smart to piss off a guy that kills people for a living, tree thumper.” The elf bristles at the disrespect. He grasps at the chain connected to the collar locked on Will’s neck and pulls hard, making him slam on the bars, the chain is taut, and Will’s cheek is plastered on the bars. Pulling out a knife, the guard drags it to the nymph’s pointed ears.

“You forget your place, you are nothing more than cattle in display for those fat fucks to pleasure themselves with your blood or body. You don’t scare me.” He lets go of the chain.

“Make sure you’re ready. Someone will bring you to the tailor soon.” He walks away with the last word.

Count Hannibal Lecter was akin to a fallen angel. All those in his fiord would tell you that their Lord was a benevolent man, an academic that has dipped his foot in almost all the sciences and magics his species can afford. He was high Fae that was for sure, though no one knows what specifically. His lineage has been in nobility for as long as anyone can remember. No one really knows how old the man is.

Hannibal wakes before the sun can rise. After some time, the light seeps from the cracks of the curtains and open window lets the winter spring winds brush against his face. He felt more tired than usual this morning but also sated. He had a particularly large meal last night, because of his travels, he hasn’t been able to hunt in a long while.

Standing up, Hannibal makes sure to fix the comforter before moving to ring his bell by the nightstand. The sound of chimes is followed by a knock on the door.

“Master? You called?” Hannibal puts the bell down and sits on a chair by the glass balcony doors.

“Come in.” The door opens to reveal a woman with red hair, her skin is sallow and grey, black eyes with purple pupils, a mouth that looks like an insect’s. She wore a typical maid uniform, her head was bowed, making sure her eyes stayed focus on the ground to show submission.

“Please make sure the kitchen is ready for me. My horse should be ready by noon.”

“Yes Master. Are you to bathe and dress for the day?”

“Yes.” With that confirmation, 6 more maids come in with pails of hot water, pouring it in the washing tub. Two of them undress Hannibal and lead him to the basin. All the women are different species of Fae and shifters. All proudly showing their heritage with customizations to their uniforms like cutouts for their tails, horns, arm or back spikes ,or hooves.

Hannibal hums as he sinks in the water. They pour various muted scents along with herbs. Nothing too overpowering for his heightened sense of smell. The hands scrubbing his body are fast and light, never lingering for too long.

After the bath, expert hands start dressing him in intricate looking clothing. His ring with the Lecter family insignia on his thumb was cold to the touch. Hannibal starts to twirl it as the women finishes lacing his shoes.

“Thank you.” Hannibal says as soon as they finish. All of them bow their heads as he leaves the room. Outside the hall, 2 guards are waiting for him.

“Good Morning gentlemen.” They salute briefly and follow him down as he walks towards his study. As he arrives, a man in a monocle opens the door for him. Inside, a woman with raven hair greets Hannibal.

“Start your report Chiyoh.” Chiyoh was petite with bright yellow eyes and orange fox ears lay on her head.

“Yes Master. The docks are in good conditions, sales are high as the fisheries have brought in a considerably large catch. The farm plateaus have been asking for an extension on their taxes as they have spent a large portion of their funds on expanding the fields. Lastly, a messenger from the capital has come. The king has asked for your presence in the kingdom of Crou Strax to represent Lugresh for possible peace talks.” Chiyoh subtly tilts her head in apprehension. It was no secret how the kingdom of Crou Strax treat the Fae behind their boarders. Hannibal Leans back a little in his chair.

“Hmm. I guess the succession proceedings is not going smoothly if the King cannot spare a single heir for a diplomatic hearing. I suppose the king has already given a date despite my lack of response?” Chiyoh inhales deeply.

“Yes master. A ship will cross the sea in 5 days. The king has ordered you make haste.” Hannibal is stroking his chair’s armrest idly. Chiyoh could tell that Hannibal is irate. Above all else, Hannibal values manners and etiquette in a person. He has little to no tolerance for disrespect. That being said, the order did come from his sovereign. It is not something he can deny without repercussions solely from his grievances.

“Have my luggage be ready by tonight. Prepare an entourage and a carriage to bring me to the docks by Acryae. You will be coming with, be sure to appoint a temporary head of residence before we leave tomorrow by the morn.”

“Yes Master.”

Hannibal stops contemplating with the rudeness of the King in favor to getting work done. Work was the same almost everyday. Taxes, reforms, business, treaties, and all the things needed to be done for a city sized community to function harmoniously.

The streets were bustling with commoners despite the early hours. Prowling in the lively spirits of the market, vendors were the embodiment of vigor for the last few days because of the sudden swamp of visitors, tourists and travelers brought by the caravan of entertainers.

Though the loud noise coming for the streets were indeed rambunctious, the Count paid no mind to it, determined to finish as much work as he can before having to leave his territory once again for an extended period of time. The clock indicates the time as 7:00a.m, he leaves the study to start cooking. All the servants in the castle are used to seeing their lord making food for himself. The chefs are usually just assistants for him and cook for the servants themselves. Cooking is one of his arts, one of his dearest paramours. Once he starts, no one dares to disturb him. No one touches his meat. No one touches his spices and no one touches the bundle of card like papers tucked away inside one of the cupboards in the Count's side of the kitchen. It took him about 30 minutes to finish cooking his breakfast. The moment his hands stop working, the servants all start to bring his dishes to the table that they set earlier. Hannibal sits down and the juice is poured in his glass by the kitchen staff.

The long pig he hunted eaten raw and in the heat of the hunt was delicious but, cooked to perfection was still highly satisfying. The meal was an exquisite **Apéritif.** A simple protein scramble to start his day, it was easy enough to make as he was still tired from a long night of hunting. Hannibal finished his meal with a cup of coffee.

Hannibal's day ends with him checking the gardens and fields around his castle. He does it partly because of his possessive instincts, making sure no other predator in his caliber was around but also to relax his eyes. Staring at long winding letters and paperwork was tedious and strains his eyes. His guards and a butler, named Franklyn, follow him a couple of paces behind. At the front cliffside of Hannibal's palace is the lake that is at the center of his fiord. He gazes down at his people… He has never really felt loneliness more than the occasional ache for companionship or his need for his artworks to be seen *but sometimes*, in the quiet of the setting sun, the wind whistling, and the peasants' jolly noises in the streets, he feels… ***longing***.

Chapter End Notes

Feedback is appreciated.

Journey

Chapter Summary

Will gets prepared for the Showcase and we get to see the brutality of the Bluig Arena.

Hannibal Journeys to the Kingdom of Crou Strax.

Chapter Notes

Trigger warning! Child death.

Warning! some action between Hannibal and Chiyoh but it's not emotional or romantic or whatevs.

I wont make it graphic and that is also not how I write love scenes. It's meant to be like that.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Wake up! Wake up!”

A human man wearing bright red garbs walks down the rows of cells in the Bluig Arena, in his hands were a wooden baton and a metal plate that he was slamming together, the sound of clanging was high pitched and you could see the shifters with heightened hearing clutching their ears in pain. This didn’t deter the man and he started doing it faster. The beast men were getting angry and a few started reaching out to the him, slashing their claws wildly in hope to catch the red robed envoy as he passed their cells.

Will massaged his temples, the noise was making his migraine worse. Once the man reached the end of the corridor, he passed his instruments to the wardens stationed by the stairs and pulled out a parchment from his satchel.

“Fighters in the early autumn roster is as follows: Iron Fang, Legionnaire, Gold Brow, Mimic, Red Grip, Boulder, Jester, Gorepelt, and Hellbane. The showcase will be done by the second moon so you will be free to talk to your sponsors before the fights.” The cells were dead quiet. Its was partly out of respect for the chosen it also because after the schedules are announced, the wardens start putting all the restrictions on the gladiators before they proceed to the feeding pen.

Everyone stood waiting by the entrance of their cells, backs turned and hands to their sides. One by one the wardens would lay runes in forms of shackles, collars, or in some cases of fire borne fae or celestials, gloves that would cut off their abilities to use their traits. In Will's case, he wore his collar 24/7 as his ability to read people was not something he could control. All nymphs had an affinity in reading auras and they are taught to temper it by their colonies at a young age. Will was not. He had an unusually enhanced ability to empathize and with no contact with other nymphs, he was basically a waking mirror. Other than his collar, he did have a thin brass anklet that cut his tether to the Goddess Terra, barring him from influencing the flora around him.

Once he was done, he followed the crowd of gladiators up the steps to get to the feeding areas. At the entrance, he was able to see the warriors of the other floors already seated in the chairs that littered the fenced land. There a hush as the named warriors entered, some of the younglings stared at them openly. His group dispersed, all choosing to join the other warriors from the other floors. Beast men and shifters often stayed together, celestials like halflings, demons and angels did too. There is a common misconception that angels and demons were mortal enemies, and in some areas of the continent that was the case, but nowadays they usually just call themselves Astrals, or if you're trying to be historically accurate then 'celestials'. The other cliques were the undead, Burrowers, and the Fae.

Will didn't like sitting with Seelie's, most of the Fae that were put into the rings were those that usually would be fighters if they were part of a colony. Will wasn't. He was a nymph, and usually, when caught by the masters, they were put into the breeding pens. It irritated him how the other Fae would look at him like he fragile. Like he was supposed to stay down, and so he often just sat with Alana.

Alana Bloom was the resident oracle in the Bluig Arena. It was unusual for the rings to have one, but Master Mason was an anxious little man that thinks that he can control the future if someone gives him a heads up.

Just in time, Alana walks in. She was a beautiful woman with black hair and eyes that were white through and through. She was blind in the literal sense, all oracles were, but that was because they see in a different plane of existence. She walks with grace, no problem navigating the slew of people and as if spotting him, she waves. She grabs his arms and pulls him towards the corner where there are less people.

"Pull up your shirt."

"I'm Fine."

“I said pull it up I want to see.” Alana doesn’t let go of Will’s arm for a while before he finally relents and lowly lifts the front of his shirt. His chest was a litany of old and new scars but in the middle of his chest was a stitched wound. The gash spanned from his left shoulder to the tip of his navel. The part on his abdomen was obviously ripped and resown. It was bright red and lifted, there were sections of it that was seeping little amounts of blood, and others that leaked yellowish puss. Will’s healing, unlike shifters and beast men, needed certain elements for it to progress faster. Namely prolonged contact with nature and a proper tether to his people’s Goddess. His body was trying its best all things considered.

“God Will. This is bad.” Alana’s brows were scrunched.

“I’m in the roster again for the Fall Scrimmages.”

“What?! They can’t put you back in so fast! What the hell is Mason thinking?” She uses a towel to wipe the puss and blood that have been staining his shirt. She was always very protective of him. She was brought in as a child and he was the one that ‘took her in’ when she was but a fledgling. Alana, despite not voicing it, prefers if Will volunteered to the breeding pens. It was inhumane and torturous but at least you wouldn’t have to fight for your right to live every waking moment. Will shut that idea down fast. Breeders were often drugged every week to induce heat if they weren’t pregnant and they were always pregnant. Their children, snatched from their nest to a life of horror. He could never subject his kin to a life like his. Not to mention, there was a chance that he would be forced to breed with his own mother, if she was still alive. He knows that there are some gladiators in the upper floors that are his half siblings. He doesn’t bother to find out. He did when he was younger, he had a half-sister that was a Genasi. Her name was Nayna. She died in the rings by his hand. After that he preferred being ignorant. Ignorance really is bliss.

“I think it’s because of the foreign land nobles coming.”

“The ones from Lugresh?” Alana raises her brows in surprise.

“Yes. A warden told me Mason requested for me to entertain the guest during his stay.” She starts breathing slightly heavier. *“**Žmogus tolimame miške. Ar tavo prakeikimas**”.* She whispers, almost undiscernible. Will leans closer to her.

“Alana. Are you ok?” Will asks silently in Sylvan, the olden language of the Seelie court. Alana pulls his shirt down.

“The time is upon us, Will.”

“This prophecy again? Alana please, I have no time for this farce, it has nothing to do with me.” Will stands up straight and moves towards the food trays. All of it as unappetizing as it was yesterday, and the day before. It was a mixture of different meats in a mush. Alana follows him bristly.

“Just promise me you will be careful, Will” She pleads, reverting back to the common language. Will turn to her, tilts his head and asks.

“Of what?”

“Powerful men.” She seemed so serious that Will let the conversation die there. They get their Food and eat together after a table clears. After breakfast an envoy brings Will to the tailor.

The tailor, similar to the healer’s hut, was a small room in the floor where most of the grooming facilities for the gladiators are set up. It was run by an old man in a worn tuxedo. His name was Oliver, a fairy from the farlands. He also had an anklet of his own and though not a lot of people know it, his wings were ripped from his back. One of the only ways to trap a fairy was to take possession of their wings. Out of all the Fae in the Arena, Oliver was probably the only one that Will likes. He was relatively harmless, and a very warm person. According to him, he was from the same colony as his mother, brought into Bluig at the same raid that put his mother in captivity.

“Ah, Will. Here for your fitting?”

“Yes Oliver. What do you have for me?” The old man waves his hand and the smell of ozone marked the use of fae magic. A tailor dummy starts walking clunkily from the group of mannequins, all wearing different outfits. The only similarity between the garbs are that the neck area is very open. The warriors need to be able to be immediately discernable so their collars have to be in full display. Th outfit meant for him was all black save for the brass plate under the black leather belt and the silver intricate design that was lain all over the arms and legs. The top part is almost completely sheer other than the black band. The chest was completely open, the neck adorning a complementary brass collar that is doing well to hide the runes. Nobles didn’t like seeing how the gladiators were treated. They get to feel generous for ‘supporting’ their favored fighters and sometimes even take them to bed. **Hypocrites**. All of them.

“Do you have anything you want to change, Will?” He shakes his head. He knew Oliver was already swamped with work, dressing all the gladiators in the arena was more than one tailor can realistically handle. Mason was a cheap fuck. Won’t hire anyone he *has* to pay just to dress his slaves.

“I suppose I should see how it fits? Is it ready to wear?” Oliver nods and runs his hand on the clothe. The attire starts to undress itself from the mannequin and flies towards Will.

“How does it feel? Using fae magics while untethered from Goddess Terra?” Will, no only in undergarments, dresses his wound in a bandage as to not stain the clothes.

“It doesn’t really feel bad, the magics feel foreign. It’s also harder to manipulate the elements. The spirits of the forest don’t listen to me as well, they don’t feel the divine presence of the Mother dearest.”

“Hmm.” The conversation trails as Oliver helps will get dressed. It was perfectly fitted and not too constricting.

“I heard you were put in the roster again for this season.”

“You heard correct.”

“Do you have any suspicion on who your opponent will be this time?” The rings don’t announce who they will be fighting before the actual day. It was their way to avoid foul play and sabotage. You can predict it sometimes but it was never 100%.

“I haven’t made any conjectures. I’ll find some time to investigate.” The rest of the session was done in a comfortable silence. Will standing still with his arms spread wide. Oliver making minor adjustments here and there.

The training area was crowded with people. Since the Summer Scrimmages just finished, the gladiators are all recuperating. Will was sitting by the weapon arsenals, sharpening a flint knife. He looks up when he hears a young voice crying followed by the shouting of a warden. He sees the younglings getting trained by a boar beast man warden. The young halfling was shaking, all the other fledglings were silent. This was a common sight here too. It was a hazing. Weeding out the weak and beating the fragility out of them.

Now, Will won’t pretend to be the hero. Valor never did anyone good here. It might seem grim, but this was for the better. That halfling won’t survive if she shows fear. The warden grabs the child by her jaw, lifting her from the ground as the girl struggles. Snot and tears streaming down

her little face. Sounds of distress come from her peers, some even kneel to beg for forgiveness in her stead. Will looks away from the display.

"Please!" "She's only been here for a week!" "She will finish the drills" The sound of the other children begging make Will's jaw clench.

"Shut it! Get back to it or you'll be next!" With that, Will hears a crack and the sound of the little girl's cries disappear. The silence in the training arena was deafening. It was broken by the sound of a struggle. Will turns to see the little halfling body crumpled in a heap in front of her 'friends' and the group of Astrals holding a teenage Demonian back from getting closer. Will can guess what's happened. The halfling was probably a sibling or kin. No one likes seeing a fellow clansman die, more so a child, for something so trivial. All the Astrals will be temperamental for a while, but that was just about as much as they can do.

No revenge.

No retribution.

No Justice.

Hannibal watches as his servants run around his front yard, rushing to get the final luggage inside the carrier wagon. His coach was quite spacious, velvet interiors, his family insignia marked outside the door, all black, and the wheels golden. Both of the vehicles where drawn by Manticores. Majestic looking beasts that have some level of intelligence commonly seen in mythical creatures. It would probably be better for diplomacy if Hannibal used non-threatening steeds in his trip to Crou Strax, seeing as there is a glaring slavery and discriminatory hate problem towards Faes and Mythics in general, but he doesn't really care. He will not bend his back, bowing to the customs of a nation that he has no respect for.

Once they are done, 4 guards and Chiyoh on armored horses Stop beside his coach, waiting for his signal to start their journey. Once he feels that everything is in order, the coachman opens the door for him to get inside. After he sat down on the soft cushioned seat, he waves his hand to signal for Chiyoh to start.

“Alright. Our first and foremost priority is Making sure Count Lecter gets to Crou Strax and back to the fiord safely. Crou Strax is a nation that has been at odds with ours for ages. Be vigilant and wear the Lecter insignia with dignity.”

There was a chorus of agreements from the other retainers. Chiyoh turns to Hannibal and bows. The other guards and the servants by the stairs do the same.

“Go forth.” The coachman signals the steeds to proceed. His 3 convoys follow his coach and the other 2 guard the luggage wagon.

The journey to the seaport village near Hannibal’s fiord lasts no more than a day and a half. To get there, they needed to pass a vast meadow near the dwarven mines, there were various different fae, gnomes ,and hobbits that call it home. It was a place that had almost no shade from the sun, a sheen of golden dust ever present from the pixie wells that produced their arcana powder.

Pass that was a dark forest, filled with creatures from the unseelie court, countless obvious traps that would snare you if you got to close to the colonies that lived there. Most of the creatures avoided their party due to Hannibal’s presence. There were some that were attracted to the light of there torches. Granted they were torn down by the sentry before they even got close to Hannibal.

It was a monotonous trip, Hannibal just spent his time reading about Crou Strax’s nobility and the current political climate. It wasn’t good. Everything he read about them made the nation sound like a barbaric country with horrendous traditions and even more atrocious people. It made Hannibal think about his King’s decision to start peace talks with such a country. How much trouble has he made for himself to resort to this. On the outside, Hannibal is the picture of elegance, but the look in his eyes indicated how displeased he was of his part in this. That being said, he is curious about the flora and fauna of this nation. He is a man of science after all.

They stop in the middle of the Forest for the night. The sentinels start a fire, not afraid of the creatures lurking the shadows with Hannibal with them. It was an understatement to say that Hannibal was a powerful man. There weren’t many High Fae alive to this day, other than the King and the ‘lost mage’ of the volcanic islands, Hannibal was the most prominent name in the lot. High Fae are speculated to be immortal beings that walked with the *‘Mother Highest Terra’* when she still had a physical body along with the earliest Celestials. There were more of them back then, one by one they died during the long ages of war. Honestly, Hannibal has never met a High Fae that died via natural means, he doesn’t know what that says about him but he has learned to not dwell on it.

With his tent set up by the sentries and his belongings laid for him by the two servants he brought, he sits down in his makeshift chair.

“Master, will you bathe for the night? The waters are done boiling.” Chiyoh stand by the tent flaps, eyes downcast.

“Bring it in. I’m eager to rest for the night.” Chiyoh nods and motions for the two other women to set the washing basin up. Hannibal gets in the bath and motions for the two other women to leave Hannibal and Chiyoh alone. Chiyoh starts washing Hannibal with a cloth.

“Have you heard any news from the capital ever since I left?” Hannibal tilts his head to the side as she washes the count’s neck.

“The King’s approval in the parliament has been on the rocks ever since he had claimed his bastard second son as an official member of the royal family, making the second prince eligible for the crown. The Queen and her family have made their displeasure apparent at the treatment of the king towards the crown prince.” Hannibal motions for Chiyoh to undress.

She stands up and undoes the knots of her dress and lets it fall to the floor. Carefully, she fold her dress neatly and puts it by the tent flaps and soon her underwear follow. Her orange ears and tail stand out in the dark as she walks toward Hannibal and gets in the basin, straddling Hannibal.

“The king is being foolish. Risking his relations to the Queens family for a bastard son. If he cannot protect his progeny, why paint a target on his back?” Hannibal’s emotionless eyes look onto Chiyoh face, her face is scrunched from Hannibal’s sheer size, he pulls her hair just enough for her to lean back. The sound of flesh on flesh can be heard along with the splashing of the water.

“Unconditional love is only relevant if you can make those that defy it, **burn**.” Hannibal groans as all the tension in his body releases. Chiyoh is panting. Shakily she stands and starts to put her clothes back on. She goes out for a moment before Chiyoh and the servants come back and they change the water in the basin, working to get Hannibal clean for bed. Once they are done, Hannibal is sitting by the fire, Chiyoh in new clothes stands by him, pouring his wine and nursing the fire.

They depart from their camp before dawn break and reach the seaport village before noon. The village chief greets him with enthusiasm and lead them towards the townhall where the people have prepared a feast for their departure.

“Ah! Count Lecter! Welcome to Levia village. It is an honor to have you here!” The man clasps his hand and shakes it with enthusiasm. Hannibal smiles but keeps his hand limp.

“The pleasure is all min, Sir…?” Hannibal trails off

“Ah! I’m Baron Clemis. We’re the same you and I! I’m a noble too.” Hannibal’s eyes twitch a bit. He was something, that is for sure.

“You! Servant girl. Bring the count’s stuff in the ship.” He turns to Hannibal. “We have prepared a meal for you and your entourage. I’m sure you will love it. We have all the finest here.” The man starts prattling about his wealth and status, you can see the insecurity pouring out the man in folds. At one point, he pulls at a maid’s hair because she hadn’t heard him calling.

“Excuse me sir Clemis. Do you have a business card perhaps? I would love to get in touch some time.” Clemis tries not to show how he bristles at Hannibal for not using his ‘title’ when addressing him.

“Yes of course! Sir Lecter. Here you go.” No one in that room missed the title Clemis used. The lunch filled with veiled insults lasted only an hour before Hannibal had to get to the ship. The ship was pretty big, it was per request of the king. Further pleasantries with the Baron were sparse and soon, the ship was moving away from the docks. Hannibal stayed by the helm to watch the mermaids waves goodbye to them as they enter foreign waters. Hannibal could not help but feel an itch in his chest, it may have been anticipation or irritation. He could not really tell, what he does know, is that he is trudging lands he had not set foot in eons. ***Who knows what he will find?***

Chapter End Notes

Arcana powder is a dust that pixies use in their magics

Mother Dearest, Goddess Terra, Mother Terra, Mother Highest, are all names for the Fae's Goddess. Each species has their own Gods and Goddesses. In a species, there are different Races. So for example, Beastmen are both humanoid looking beasts and shifters and stuff. The undead are like zombies, licht, Vampires etc. Fae are Forest spirits, these include the seelie and unseelie court. Mythics are Elves, dwarves, hobbits, orcs and what you usually see in a fantasy setting. They are not fae. Elves live in the forest mostly but they arents forest spirits, they are

jus cohabitate with fae most of the time. They have normal souls like humans. Celestials on the other hand are beings with otherworldy souls, Angels, Demons, Halflings and tieflings.

When Worlds Collide

Chapter Summary

> Hannibal get his first taste of Crou Strax. It was quite different from how he remembered it. That being said, it has been centuries since he had first step foot in this nation.

Chapter Notes

> Massive lore drop here! Sorry if you get bored :,D I love world building so... Sorry if ur only here for the romance... This will have a lot of lore, manipulation, politics and slowwwww burnnnnn.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hannibal and his entourage reach the docks of Crou Strax in 2 days. The two kingdoms were separated by a relatively small body of water. Hannibal, standing by the helm, saw a big group of soldiers all adorning the colors of Their King Francis Dolarhyde. Blue and white. It was a grand display of power, they definitely didn't pass up the chance to peacock around a foreign noble. The gate was lowered, acting as a bridge to the docks. The carriage, pulled by the manticores came down first. Seeing the beasts up close, gasps and murmurs sounded from the crowd of commoners. All humans. As expected. Once all the luggage had been unloaded, Hannibal stepped down followed by his sentinels, Chiyoh just a few paces behind him. Noticing the obvious heritage of his people, he could see the villager's grimace. Not used to seeing all manners of fae and mythics not chained.

The general, based on the stars on his uniform, greeted them. He was a portly man with a bald head and a face so red, he almost seemed demonian.

"Greetings! I A-M G-E-N-E-R-A-L" He says, sounding out the words as if talking to a child.

"I speak the common language fluently, General. I have no problem understanding your diction. Please, speak freely." Hannibal smiles like he always does when talking to nobles. He had a slight accent, indicative of his foreign nationality.

"Ah. Yes of course. My name is Christopher Word. It's a…. delight to finally meet… a person of such high esteem" Christopher made sure to pause between phrases, it was apparent that he was trying hard to get the flowery words out of his mouth despite his actual views. Even Chiyoh, who had practice dealing with nobles, cringed.

"Yes, we are happy to be here, eager to get the diplomatic hearing in progress. That being said, I would love to get settled, it has been a long travel."

“Right! Of course. If you would follow me.” The general walks slowly, he was obviously wary, eyes darting around his party as if trying to find an excuse to kick up a fuss.

“I hope your journey has been pleasant, Count Lecter. I hear the waters have not been kind.”

“The sea is not meant to be kind, General. It is a power that our Mother Dearest bestowed upon this plane to house her most ferocious children, our kin.” The General looks at Hannibal with a smile resembling a grimace.

“Well, I guess you call those fish cousin, eh?” He burst out a laugh. Hannibal could hear one of his sentry men grumble out a warning, so low that the growl was undiscernible by human ears. He pauses his step and turns to the feeble excuse of a noble.

“The Mer people are no more fish than you are ape, Christopher.” The man sputters. Not expecting Hannibal to call him out for vocabulary that was commonly used in Crou Strax. The clanging of armor as the soldiers walk by their side halt. Silence blankets the crowd.

“I hope such terms are not used in the future. You would not want us to misunderstand, no?” Christopher’s mouth opens and closes, no words escape him, only unintelligible sounds.

“I have never--! My word—You--!” Christopher, face red and eyes bulging, suddenly points his finger at Hannibal prompting his right-hand guard, an Avian man with wings the color of midnight, to step forward and unsheathe his sword. Immediately, the human soldiers draw their own weapons. The show of aggression set off a domino effect, prompting Hannibal’s’ people to do the same. Weapons drawn, claws exposed, and fangs bared. Seeing the display of Mythical prowess, the humans collectively took a step back. No one dared to make a sound. It was a stand-off.

Hannibal could have stopped it. In a political standpoint, such trivial matters were not worth such a fuss but….

Why should he?

The moment was spoiled by the voice of a woman.

“Please, gentlemen. Let us not ruin the monumental occasion. We implore your forgiveness, Count Lecter. Certain pleasantries are lost on the general. He has not often entertained foreigners.” She was an elderly woman wearing a floor length dress that covered every part of her body. Hair that was pinned up in a tight bun and a veil like head dress that trailed along her back. She had an air of sophistication about her commonly seen amongst those born in nobility.

“Duchess Katherine!” Christopher bends his body to bow.

“Duchess Katherine? I’m surprised the Lady in charge of this territory denied greeting us at our arrival but then again, it seems like the manners I’m afforded in my nation and all the others I have visited are… not tradition in your nation. My apologies.” She raises her eyebrows and purses her lips.

“I’m sure you know how recent the decisions were for this visitation. I’m a very busy woman, I was hoping that sending my highest ranking General would be sufficient.”

“Despite ‘certain pleasantries’ being lost on him?”

“Despite that, yes.”

Hannibal narrows his eyes. He expected hostilities. It was a contentious situation and even he was unhappy with the state of affairs but such open display of discourtesy made Hannibal’s gums itch.

“It seems your business is settled, seeing as you are here.” Hannibal waves his hand, and his sentinels all straighten themselves. They don’t miss the way the Duchess stare at the more supernatural presenting Lugrens, she moves her eyes to Hannibal, looking at the top of his head down to his toes.

“Yes, I tried to be hasty, it seems the General has not lived up to expectations.” Christopher, now silent, walks away as he was not needed. Katherine doesn’t pay him any mind. She instead just takes up the General’s past position to lead Hannibal further into their territory.

“I have to say, I appreciate Lugresh sending a noble like you.” She opens her fan and covers half her face in it, probably hiding a condescending smirk.

“Care to expand on what a ‘noble like me’ entails, Duchess?”

“You are a handsome man, Count Lecter, it also helps that you look—”

“Human?” Hannibal’s patience was running thin.

Katherine eyes him, face still covered but sharp as ever. She chuckles.

“In the honor of candor, yes. Sending a Lugren noble that looks human will work in your favor.” A handmaid bristles. She jerks before Chiyoh grabs her arm.

“Emilija” Chiyoh whispers. She holds Emilija’s nape and forces her head down, as she was posed before. Katherine does not miss it and sneers.

“I thank you for your honesty, but I assure you madame. I have been alive long before Crou Strax was a nation.” He smiles at her, hands behind his back.

“Of course.” Obviously disbelieving.

“Here we are, Count. The emerald manor was prepared for your stay.” It was quaint manor. Clean despite some vines growing by the lime wash walls. A man in a black tux and a monocle along with 8 maids were by the stairs. The butler walks over and bows his head.

“Good evening my lord. My name is Henry, I’m the head butler of this manor. It’s an honor to be of assistance during your stay.”

“I’ll leave you to rest. You have a long trip ahead of you. Our King has specifically ordered for us to show all that Crou Strax has to offer.” Both the Count and the Duchess were aware of how those words sound but neither said anything.

“Thank you.”

With that Katherine leaves with her escort of soldiers, leaving the Lugrens to situate the steeds and unpack all the luggage. Chiyoh leaves Hannibal’s side to talk with Henry leaving him alone.

Hannibal closes his eyes and tilts his head back a little. The wind was salty, the sound of the seaport was tame, he could practically taste the tension in the air. The feeling in his chest was getting stronger. He places his arms on his chest and the warmth wraps around his body.

“My Lord?” Emilija, the arachnid fae handmaiden calls out to him.

“If you want to rest, I can bring you to your quarters. Madame Chiyoh is currently coordinating with the humans.”

“Emilija. Do you think I need you to protect me?”

“M-my lord?” Hannibal opens his eyes but still facing the direction of the sun in the horizon.

“Answer me.”

“I-i—no! My lord. I jus—”

“We are in foreign lands. One that is not so partial to our presence and perception is key, child.” He faces the woman, head still bowed and hands fidgeting. Hannibal places his hand on her shoulder, feeling her lord’s grip, she jerks but only starts trembling when an aura of black, heavy as tar, begins to blanket the area. The sound of the fae servants move away from the two of them. No one says a word, but they watch the exchange with lowered eyes. All the human retainers could be heard mumbling, gasping, muttering, not used to fae magics being performed out in the open. Though the humans could not hear what Hannibal was saying, they could tell it wasn’t something they would want to disturb.

“I don’t want rumors about me not being able to control my subjects, Emilija. Here, we are seen as animals. To humans, we are monsters that need to be chained. They will be looking at us under a microscope and spin tales about every single action hoping for anything they can use as justification for their actions.” He tightens his grip.

“Are you an animal, Emilija?” She grunts as Hannibal’s clutch becomes stronger.

“N-no, my lord.”

“No. You are a servant of house Lecter, kin of Goddess Terra. Your actions reflect your master.” He grasps Emilija’s chin and forces her to look at him. Her eyes refuse to look him directly.

“I hope I’m clear.”

“Y-es, Master.” He smiles and lets her go to stand up straight.

“Good.” Emilija bows and starts leading Hannibal to his bedroom, trembling and shaking, the servant all part for them to pass and only when they have gone in the manor did they resume their tasks.

The next day came quickly. Hannibal did not often eat normal grub as he didn’t need to feed often. The start of the day was filled with meeting with Lady Katherine and touring the city. It was dull and honestly, the smell of fear in the air was getting tiring.

“Once the Arena Maester Mason Verger gives us the go ahead, We can head to one of the nations greatest attractions!” Katherine exclaims.

“The Fae arena?” Hannibal asks.

“Yes! Our fae fighters are given the best I assure you. Paid handsomely, great living conditions to booth.” She gestures to a servant, and they bring a Genasi faeling in simple garbs. She was meek and hunched in posture.

“This is Merry. She was a gladiator in the past but decided to leave her life in the limelight to live a simpler life. She’s employed in my manor as a stablewoman now.” Katherine smiles, presenting the Genasi.

“Yes, they are very good to me. I had the best days in t-the rings. Master Mason is a generous master.” Her eyes kept going to the soldiers next to Katherine. God, this woman was a terrible liar. If Hannibal had been a lesser man, he would’ve laughed.

“Our Fae volunteer to be gladiators as a form of employment. It’s really al very simple.”

So this is what their strategy was. Hannibal commends the effort that is for sure. He guesses the only way they could justify the slavery. Employment? A child could tell they were covering their behinds.

They end their ‘tour’ and Katherine tells Hannibal that they will head for Bluig while they anticipate for the Arena to be ready. They exchange pleasantries and Hannibal retires for the night.

Sitting by the balcony of the master bedroom, Hannibal calls for Chiyoh. In a moment, there was a knock on the door.

“Come in.”

“You called, Master?” Chiyoh comes in, her hand held an oil lamp.

“What do you see?”

“Pardon?”

“This farce. It’s all too… tame.”

“I suppose, My lord… but is that not in our favor?”

“I know our king. Centuries of our Immortal sovereign being on the throne, why did he sire an heir now? Why try to mend the ties between our nation… For support? This war has depleted both Lugresh and Crou Strax. The coffers are running dry, yes, but is that enough for the human’s King to extend an olive branch? Something bigger is at motion and I don’t appreciate being used as a pawn.” Chiyoh scrunches her brows.

“Forgive me for being bold, My lord, but maybe the human king has set aside their grudges in the hopes of ending the war?” He hums in response to her naïve reasoning.

“The Dolarhyde line are nothing but paranoid, my dear. You know the history of Crou Strax ,yes? How the Fae became a prosecuted in this nation.” She nods.

“I have heard the stories. It was said, in the early years of the Dolarhyde reign, an oracle had prophesied of the fall of their empire at the hands of a man with Fae blood. In hopes to preserve their rule, the humans started to round up the native Fae colonies. As the years went by, slavery became the norm and all the mythical civilizations in this nation were demolished.”

“Yes. Humans in the face of their mortality, grasp at straws, claw their way up whatever totem pole of power to prove that they aren’t less than. Do you think it was chance that their king decided it was time to ‘put differences aside’?” Chiyoh contemplates on it. She has been Hannibal’s spy master for as long as she can remember, and this may be the biggest conspiracy she has been in the know of.

“What do you suppose the reason is, Master?” He doesn’t answer her. Some things Hannibal doesn’t think she needs to know. He favors Chiyoh because she is smart. Quick witted and he wanted to nurture that but at the end of the day, she is a servant.

“You are dismissed.” She bows and swiftly leaves the room.

In the Bluig Arena

All the gladiators that were appointed to attend the ball were lined up. They were gathered for Mason. No one knew why. He Master doesn’t usually supervise or involve himself personally in the preparations. The gate opens and Mason Verger enters with her perpetual shadow, Margot, his twin sister, by his side.

“My warriors!” He opens his arms in pride, looking at his herd of attack dogs.

“As you all know, the ball will be in 2 days, and we have a special visitor. A Lugren Noble~” He singsongs it mockingly. Nobody reacts to the display of ridiculousness.

“I mean, the closest a beast can be to a noble.” He laughs. He walks over to Will and pats his shoulders. Will doesn’t move his eyes from facing forward.

“Our dear King has ordered us to be in our best behavior. Ok piggy?” He moves to the halfling next to him.

“Anyone that cries of mistreatment.” He grabs a baton from a guard.

“Will be punished.” He hits the astral on the knee. He doesn’t fall though, only gritting his teeth and closing his eyes.

“Be the picture of perfection.” He hits another warrior.

“And you will remain unscathed.” Dropping the baton to the ground, he walks back to the posse of humans.

“Rejoice! You get to see a noble from your motherland~”

What an Idiot. Will thinks. Most of the Fae in the arena were from native colonies in Crou Strax. Those Lugresh nobles were born with a golden spoon in their mouths. He feels no kinship for them. Mason Leaves after the threatening them.

“As you have heard. A Lugren Noble will be visiting the arena to... sight see. A lot is at stake. Remember what you have to lose. If the noble asks you of the master, you will sing his praise, he asks you of the arena, spin tales of luxury! Whatever you must do to fool that filthy pissant. Understood?” A chorus of grunts resounded.

Will couldn’t help but be exasperated. The only reason he was put in the fall scrimmages again was because Mason wanted to put his best feet forward and was peacocking his named gladiators around. What a joke.

The moment Hannibal got to Bluig, the feeling in his chest went from itch to pins and needles. At one point, Hannibal drew blood from himself to see if he has contracted something, though highly unlikely as there wasn’t a lot that could get him sick. He didn’t have an answer so he prompted to just focus on the visit to the infamous Gladiator arenas. They didn’t have to wait long before the Verger’s opened their gates to them.

“Count Lecter!” Hannibal hears the greeting as he was getting down his carriage. Master Mason, he guesses, comes to intercept him with the shake of a hand.

“It is such an honor to meet you.”

“And I, you, Sir Verger.” Mason gestures for a servant and they bring a box of fine fabrics and exotic food.

“A gift.” Chiyoh grabs the boxes from the human retainers.

“Oh dear. Forgive me but I have nothing to offer you in return.”

“No matter, Count. This is all in the spirit of celebration! Come, come. The gladiators are about to start their sparring. I would love to show you my warriors.” A few of Hannibal’s sentry men tense at the mention of the slaves. If Mason noticed, he didn’t show it.

“I would love to be involved in your traditions. Please, lead the way.”

Hannibal walks beside him. They enter a big archway, marble and stone make the foundations of the building with intricate carvings in a show of extravagance. There were guards lining every pillar, armed to their teeth. They get to a colosseum with three archways similar to the one they entered from. They get situated in a viewing deck, decked with refreshments, cushioned seats and surprisingly, fae, men and women, dressed in sheer dresses holding big fans. He could feel the stares of the Straxan Fae burning holes on his head as they gawk at fae nobility.

“Beautiful, are they not?” Mason says.

“Yes. All my kin have been blessed by Mother Highest in that respect. It is a shame you have not seen them in their element.”

“I beg your pardon?”

“Fae thrive in nature, Sir Mason.” Hannibal extends his arm to the female aqua Eladrin. She hesitates but eventually put her hand in his. She gasps when she feels the surge of energy from Hannibal. Never has she felt so close to their Goddess Terra.

“I assure you, Count Lecter. My people are perfectly content.” Hannibal turns to him with a smile that didn’t reach his eyes.

“Your people?” Mason smiles in response.

“Yes. My people.”

Mason and Hannibal exchange a fair share of small talk and thinly veiled insults before the gladiators pour in for their sparring. Hannibal sees all manner of fae, mythics, astrals, and beastmen of all stages of maturity. Before they start the sparring, they line up in front of the viewing deck that Mason and Hannibal were in and bow.

The heat that Hannibal had been purposely ignoring had become a wildfire that encased Hannibal’s entirety. His eyes were drawn to a nymph. A nymph? A nymph in a gladiator’s ring. He couldn’t see his eyes, only the man’s branch like horns, and brown hair. Without noticing, Hannibal had stood up and walked towards the railing.

“Count?” Mason calls to him though Hannibal could barely hear him. The noises sounded like they were under water. The moment the nymph lifts his head, Hannibal gazes into the bluest eyes he has ever seen in his long life.

Chapter End Notes

Eladrin are fae that look like elemental spirits. You can search em hehe. I love reading your comments so anything you have to say or questions are greatly appreciated !!

Hannibal and Will FINALLY see each other! We have a long ways ahead of us <3

Till next time <3

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!